

Commingled Recycling Report, Seattle Bag Ban Update and Ordinance Work



Optimizing the Commingled Residential Curbside Recycling Systems in NW WA

- Multi-year process lead by Ecology
- Many stakeholders: jurisdictions, sw/recycling collectors, MRFs, processors, Zero Waste Washington
- Report in draft form, final by end of year.
- Looks at issues in “system” and recommendations on addressing them
 - Commodity related issues
 - Commingled Recycling SYSTEM issues
- Next step is forming Implementation Work Groups

Plastics Bags and Film

Issue: Plastic bags and film become entangled in sorting equipment at MRFs and negatively impact the sorting of other commodities

- Promote taking bags to retailer programs, build on national efforts such as Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP).

➤ Discussions with WRAP beginning. WA is in their 2017 budget.



System Issue: Plastics

Issue: The mix of plastic resins and containers is becoming more complex.

- Explore the potential for siting a Plastic Recovery Facility in the NW Region to improve the ability to collect and process existing curbside plastics and additional plastics.
 - (Now in discussions with QRS involving Ecology, Commerce, OR DEQ, Office of Economic Development and touring local MRFs)

Seattle Bag Ban Update to Council

Update Report presented to Council July 2016

- Now 15 jurisdictions in WA with Bag Bans
- Around country, model similar to Seattle is preferred
 - Ban plastic carryout
 - Charge for large paper bags
 - Encourage reuse

Compliance and Results

Compliance Snapshot- Visited 25 businesses from 4 retail sectors:

- Ranked compliant, partially compliant, not compliant.
- Almost full compliance from large grocers, large drug stores, and apparel stores
- Compliance much lower in small to medium-sized, independently-owned grocery and convenience stores.

Fewer bags landfilled: decrease of 50% between 2010 and 2014 (262 tons to 136 tons)

Retailer Feedback

- IF a bag ban, they prefer Seattle model.
- \$.05 paper bag charge very important to retailers. They want sunset date removed from code.
- Reusable bags considered the norm in Seattle.
- Concerned that people are not cleaning their reusable bags.
- On-going education and outreach is key to bag ban's continued success.

Emerging Issues and Next Steps

- Proposed revision to bag ordinance
 - Remove sunset date
 - Address contamination issues: restrict green tinting to compostable bags only
- Begin to publicize importance of cleaning bags.
 - (there has now been some media coverage)
- Developing renewed outreach strategy for small and independent grocery and convenience stores.

Additional Emerging Issues and Next Steps

- Loose plastic bags are problem at MRFs
 - Continue to message that bags must be bagged in larger bag.
 - Get more bags collected at retailer drop-site and separate from curbside system.
 - Work with industry and retailers to bring WRAP Recycling Action Program to Seattle and WA State.
 - (Discussions with WRAP program, now added WA State to 2017 budget, NWPSC Packaging Committee and Commingled Recycling Workgroup to discuss next steps)
- Engage industry regarding flexible packaging.
 - (Engaged with national packaging industry workgroups on flexible packaging)

Status of Seattle Packaging Ordinance Work

Proposed revisions addressed 3 existing ordinances:

- Expanded polystyrene foam
- Food service ware and packaging
- Bag ban

- Splitting apart and going forward with bag ban revisions now.
- Followed by foam
- Then service ware, allowing for more stakeholder work

Bag ordinance revisions

- Removes Dec. 31 2016 sunset date for required fee on paper bags.
- Establishes compostable definition.
- Requires compostable bags to be labeled and tinted green or brown.
- Non-compostable bags that are distributed may not be tinted green or brown.
- Disallows labeling bags degradable, biodegradable, etc.

Status

- Proposed revision regarding bags has been sent to Council.
- Anticipate action before the end of the year but after Council works on budget.
- SWAC may want to speak to Council on the subject through a letter or preparing for anticipate Council hearing and testifying (or both)